

Virginia Council on Women

Minutes

January 29, 2020

Richmond-Patrick Henry Building, 1111 E. Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219 USA

Pre-meeting Tour: Council Members toured the tribute, located in the Virginia State Capital Building, to the 100th Anniversary of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Members then toured the *Virginia Women's Monument: Voices from the Garden*.

Members Present: Carol Rick Gibbons (Chair); Aisha Johnson (Secretary); Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth (Ex-Officio Council Member); Nicole Carry; Caryn Foster Durham; Diana Gates; Da'Shaun Joseph; Karishma Merchant; Elizabeth Peay; Holly Seibold; Michelle Strucke; Devin Pugh Thomas; Katie Tyson; Michelle Woods; Ramunda Young; Olga Boucher

Staff Present: Traci J. DeShazor, Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth (Staff Liaison); Danielle Campbell

Call to Order: Chair Carol Rick Gibbons called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m. A quorum was present. A brief history of the Virginia Council on Women was given for new members. The history included the Council's beginning dating back to the 1970's, at which time it was named The Council on the Status of Women.

Agenda and Minutes: The October 19, 2019 minutes were unanimously approved on a motion by Nicole Carry, seconded by Ramunda Young. The January 29, 2020 agenda was unanimously approved on a motion by Michelle Strucke, seconded by Katie Tyson.

Announcement from the Chair: Chair Carol Rick Gibbons announced that she was stepping down as the Chair of the Council this calendar year and Ashley Reynolds Marshall will assume the role of Chair. Elections for the positions of Vice Chair and Secretary will be held at the next meeting.

Council Updates: Kelly Thomasson gave the Council Update. Legislation was introduced in the House to increase the number of members on advisory boards appointed by the Governor, including the Council on Women, from 18 to 21. Some boards have memberships of 21 appointees, others, such as the Council on Women, have memberships of 18 appointees. This also impacts the African American Advisory Board, Latino Advisory Board, and Asian American Advisory Board. The legislation would also allow the boards to vote on the chair and vice chair. Currently those positions are appointed by the Governor's Office. The legislation would also modernize the language of all advisory boards to mirror each other, and lengthen the terms to four years for future appointments. The legislation would also allow advisory boards to meet as often as possible. All advisory boards will have a Standard Operating Procedures manual and have the option to submit a report. The membership number of 21 should be reached by the Council on Women, if legislation is passed, by the August 2020 meeting.

Women's Healthcare Initiative Subcommittee Report and Update:

Michelle Strucke gave the Healthcare Subcommittee report and began with a brief history of the Subcommittee. The healthcare focus started under Governor Terry McAuliffe. The Subcommittee has recently focused on maternal health and racial equity. The Office of the Governor and the Office of Health and Human Services held 10 listening sessions state-wide on the subject of maternal health and racial equity following the first event held in Roanoke in April 2019. Listening sessions around women's healthcare and equity can continue with a follow-up event being convened.

Potential upcoming events include a workshop with the Girl Scouts in Hampton Roads connecting women's healthcare with STEM education. The workshop would assist the Girl Scouts in obtaining a gold badge. A date for the event has not been set.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Council can offer speakers at agency events focused on these subjects. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. A discussion was held about bringing a mobile mammography unit from North Carolina to Virginia.

STEM Initiative Subcommittee Report and Update: Traci DeShazor gave the STEM Initiative Subcommittee Report and Update. Chair Carol Rick Gibbons gave a background on the STEM Committee. The Committee offers education scholarships for graduating seniors (female or identifying as female) who are pursuing a degree in STEM education. This is the ninth year of the contest. The application process started in December 2019. In previous years the application process started in January of the year the scholarships were awarded. The contest is now closed. In 2018, the Council received over 500 applications. In 2019, the number rose to over 1,000. In 2020, 241 applications were received through the web site (203 for merit based applications and 38 for needs based applications). In 2020, the process was limited to graduating seniors only, and not juniors and seniors. In future years Council Members are asked to provide outreach in the regions in which they live. The following numbers show the numbers of applications received by region.

Region 1

Total entries: 41

Merit based entries: 36

Need based entries: 5

Region 2

Total entries: 25

Merit based entries: 20

Need based entries: 5

Region 3

Total entries: 49

Merit based entries: 41

Need based entries: 8

Region 4

Total entries: 41

Merit based entries: 36

Need based entries: 5

Region 5

Total entries: 85

Merit based entries: 70

Need based entries: 15

The applications were advertised at FASFA nights and at Title One Schools to capture potential need based applicants.

Traci DeShazor expressed the need to bring STEM outreach planning sessions at the August meeting. She also showed the Council how applications are being managed, and explained how each essay is judged by two judges and ties are broken by her and Kelly Thomasson. The awards ceremony will be held in April. Recruiting additional judges is helpful, and judges can be women and men not serving on the Council. Judges can also be recruited from other advisory boards. Chair Carol Rick Gibbons suggested the potential need for two judging matrixes, one for need and one for merit. A new fiscal agent has been secured, STEM for Her, based in the Hampton Roads area. The Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office cannot create invoices. Office staff is also not permitted to fundraise. Chair Carol Rick Gibbons has secured a \$10,000 commitment from Capital One. The Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office staff has set a deadline for April 15, 2020 to receive commitments for sponsorships. Money can be collected after April 15. Tracie DeShazor will send sponsorship packages to Council Members. In 2018, each winner received a \$10,000 scholarship. The amount per scholarship was \$7,000 in 2019.

Outreach and Legislative Update:

Catherine Finley, Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Resources provided the Outreach and Legislative Update. On January 15, 2020 the General Assembly passed a ratification resolution for the Equal Rights Amendment. The Reproductive Health Protection Act passed in a 52 to 45 vote in the House of Delegates, and an amended version passed in the Senate with Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax breaking the tie. The Act repeals ultrasound requirements for women seeking abortion services. The Act also repeals the 24 hour waiting period and the informed consent provision, which is literature given to women seeking abortion services. The Act also repeals the requirement that first trimester abortion clinics performing more than five abortions be hospitals and expands other medical professionals trained to perform first trimester abortions.

Texting and driving, and failure to wear seat belts are now primary offenses.

A proposal will repeal the provision in Virginia requiring a legal permanent resident of five years to fulfill a 40 quarter (10 year) work requirement to be eligible for Medicaid. There are efforts underway to allow doulas as a benefit for Medicaid patients. More than 380,000 individuals in

Virginia are Medicaid eligible under Medicaid expansion. An on-line dashboard is now available which includes Medicaid benefits. The goal is to improve meaningful access.

Additional legislation would repeal the TANF family cap rule. This is designed to eliminate the stigma that women are expanding their families to qualify for TANF benefits.

Changes are being suggested to the foster care system. Changes would expand the opportunity to adopt for people with close relationships with children, not just family relationships. An increase for local human services workers is also suggested, as well as increased assistance for children at risk of being placed in the foster care system.

Holly Seibold discussed repealing the tax on tampons which passed through the House and Senate, but was not funded in the state budget. She also discussed how this effort is a step closer to ensuring women are not discriminated against in the tax code. Senator Jennifer Boysko submitted Holly Seibold's request as a budget amendment.

Traci DeShazor requested that Council Members communicate information to Michelle Strucke related to the Healthcare Subcommittee. Traci DeShazor will share information with the Council as a group. The Council will reconvene in April. Catherine Finley will communicate the information to the Health and Human Resources Team. A process question was presented. Can the Council make a recommendation to the Governor? The Council can make a recommendation to the Governor as a group, but individual members cannot make a recommendation to the Governor on behalf of the Council. Council Members should relay additional information to the entire Council so the group can make an informed decision. Information regarding the Subcommittee can be shared with the Subcommittee and the Subcommittee can present the information to the entire Council. A fall timeline is the best time to lend recommendations to the Governor. Traci DeShazor stated that the January 2020 meeting was too late to write a formal letter since the Council will not meet again until April. Catherine Finley can communicate information to the Health and Human Resources Team. Traci DeShazor stated that the Council might want to consider lending recommendations to the Governor as the next legislative session approaches. Legislative updates can be sent to Council Members through the Governor's Office of Community Engagement. Updates are sent to stakeholder listserves to include African American Stakeholders, LGBTQ Stakeholders, Hispanic Stakeholders, and Stakeholders in the Tribal Community.

VARatify ERA Discussion:

Kati Hornung, Campaign Coordinator for VARatify ERA gave a presentation. The Equal Rights Amendment has been in existence since 1923 when the first version was written. The most recent version was written in 1943 and went into effect in 1972. Thirty-eight resolutions have been passed at local levels. Materials are made available to everyone who requests materials. A strong core team is available for service statewide. The campaign wants citizens to be resources because they believe that leadership happens at all levels. The amendment is still being met with opposition. The Archivist said he will not add this to the Constitution until ordered to do so by a judge. This contradicts guidance from a previous Department of Justice (DOJ) memo. Different administrations have given different guidance. Two DOJ memos exist that contradict

each other. These memos can be overridden by a judicial decision. Virginia's Attorney General plans to advocate for this throughout Virginia. The House of Representatives will vote during the week of February 10 to remove the ratification deadline. It is expected to pass with bipartisan support. Seven out of 19 Republicans and all Democrats voted yes in the State Senate. Congress has the ultimate authority over constitutional amendments. The last three states to ratify completed the three state strategy. This has been advanced to the six state strategy to bring the total ratifications to 44 states and support to have the deadline removed. Marketing tools have included logos that are available to the public. Women's Councils across the country could also become involved in promoting the campaign. Chair Carol Rick Gibbons asked how the Council can help and what the Councils' role would be. Kati Hornung suggested spreading the word through family and friends, and to those in other states. She also stated that some of the most powerful actions were unstructured, such as letters to newspaper editors. Chairwoman Gibbons also asked if any corporate outreach is being done. Ms. Hornung stated that corporate outreach has not seen the success desired. Ben and Jerry's expressed interest. They have 40 flavors and women are in three flavors. One flavor came from a moveon.org petition. Ms. Hornung suggested that Council Members use corporate contacts to gain support or the Council could partner with corporations to support the campaign. Eight women's equality bills are on the campaign web site. The VAratify ERA is starting a national women's political caucus of Virginia. A parade will occur on March 8, 2020, International Women's Day, from VUC to the Capital. Council Members are invited to attend. The Women's Council is also invited to join other advisory councils in the parade. Ramunda Lark Young made a motion to participate as a Council in the parade hosted in Virginia by VAratify ERA for the purpose of supporting women and learning more about women's issues. Diana Gates seconded the motion. The Council voted to participate in the parade with Olga Boucher abstaining.

Women's Summit Subcommittee Report and Update:

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Traci DeShazor suggested changing the name of the Subcommittee to the Outreach Subcommittee. Chair Carol Rick Gibbons discussed the focus of the Subcommittee, which has been how the Council can engage with the community. Efforts started with a summit, leading to the name Summit Subcommittee. The summit included approximately 300 attendees and was focused on leadership. The Council moved away from a large summit while continuing to connect with the community. The Summit and Healthcare Subcommittees partnered to hold a small community based event. Caryn Foster Durham, Chair of the Summit Subcommittee agreed that changing the name of the Subcommittee matches the changing focus. A new name focused around empowering and engaging women better fits the focus of the Subcommittee. Raumnda Lark Young suggested renaming the Subcommittee the Community Engagement Subcommittee. Diana Gates spoke about the listening sessions for maternal health. The focus has migrated from the Council holding summits to the Council partnering with other events occurring across the state. Devin Pugh Thomas made a motion to empower Subcommittee Members to rename the Subcommittee. DaShaun Joseph seconded the motion. The conversation will continue at the next meeting.

Administrative Update:

Danielle Campbell provided the Administrative Update. She distributed the Standard Operating Procedures, which are now standardized across all advisory boards. Any updates made will be added by Danielle Campbell and distributed at the next board meeting, and subsequently at the Asian Advisory and Latino Advisory Board Meetings. She is requesting that the Council review the SOP's and notify her of changes by February 28. Changes should be submitted electronically in track changes. The Council on Women has a stand-alone web site as of January 1, 2020. Council Members are asked to provide resources including links to state agencies the Council will work most with. Council Members are also asked to provide information regarding the Council and women's issues. Danielle Campbell checks the Women@governorvirginia.gov e-mail account daily and keeps Jill Gaitens, Ashley Reynolds Marshall, and Chair Carol Rick Gibbons copied on any correspondence received. Michelle Strucke inquired about adding non-state resources such as non-profits. Danielle Campbell replied that those resources can be added. Questions were asked about adding committee information. Danielle Campbell stated that the Council can take Subcommittee photographs for the web site at the April STEM reception.

Announcements and Adjournment:

The Asian Advisory Chairperson and Latino Advisory Chairperson authored an op-ed in the *Richmond Times Dispatch*. The op-ed was written in support of the Governor's budget proposal. The African American Advisory Board wrote an executive summary and has established four subcommittees.

The meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m. with unanimous approval on a motion by Chair Carol Rick Gibbons and seconded by Ramunda Lark Young.